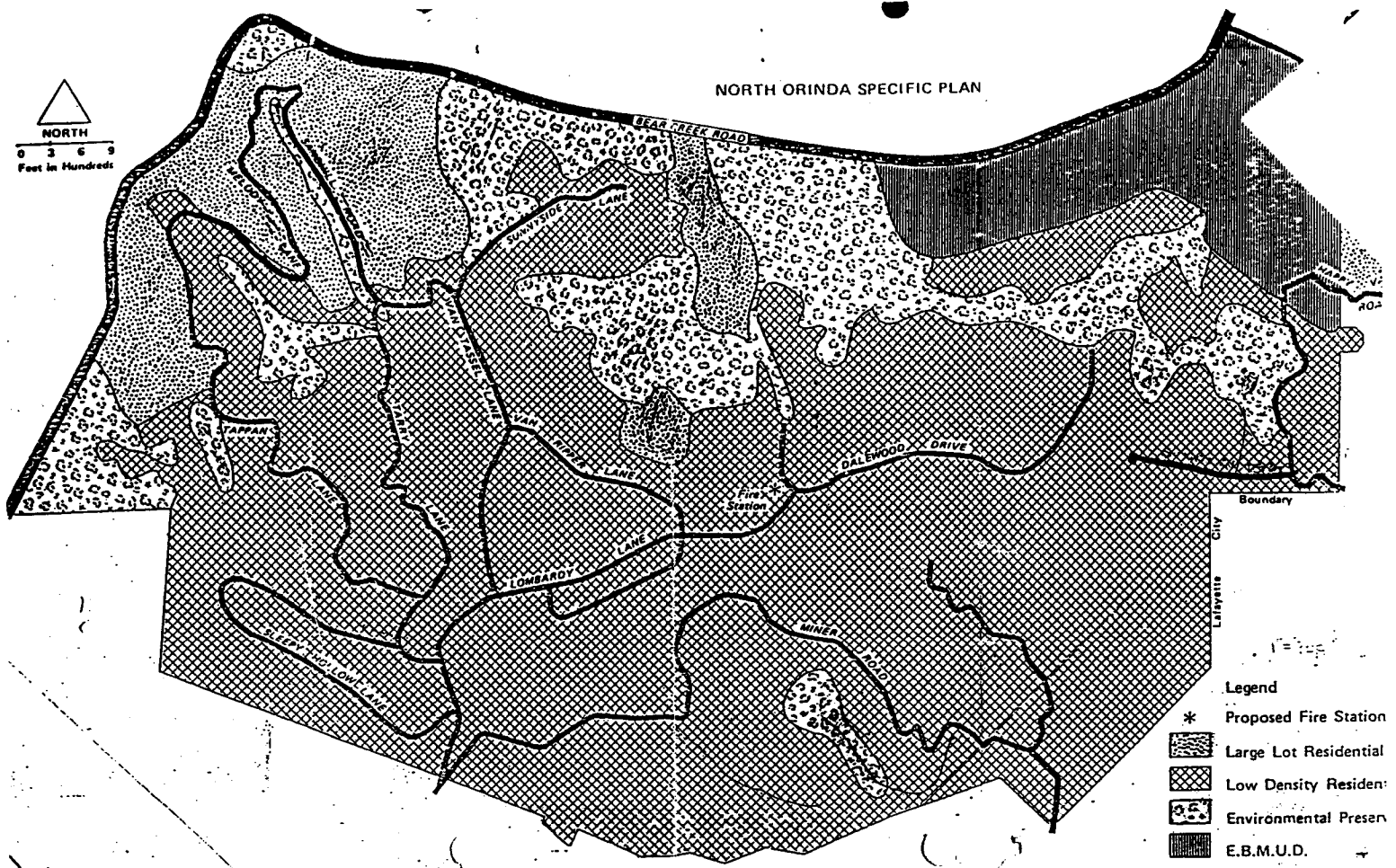


NORTH ORINDA SPECIFIC PLAN

Summary and Users Guide

As adopted November 21, 1978,
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors



SUMMARY

This Specific Plan is intended to implement various facets of the Orinda Area General Plan.

Extensive analysis of the area by a citizen's committee and the Planning Department indicated that the remaining open lands should be developed to an approximate density of one unit per 2 1/2 acres, based upon a projected carrying capacity of a maximum of 250 additional homes. A major constraint to future development is a recognition that the traffic volumes on roads in the general area were approaching capacity and under some circumstances capacities were being surpassed. The retention of significant ridges, hillsides and vegetation was emphasized. A way to accommodate these considerations is to reduce the potential population density for the area while allowing for reasonable use of the land.

Approximately one-half of the 1,500 acre area consists of parcels currently occupied with low density residential uses. The remaining half of the area contains parcels larger than 2 1/2 acres in size, some of which have not been developed.

The Specific Plan contains the following designations: (1) Environmental Preservation, a category for highly sensitive areas in which no development should take place (ridgelines, significant hillsides, tree cover, and creekbeds). Parcels created in this category are to be no less than 10 acres in size. (2) Large Lot Residential areas, in which limited development at a density of not less than 5 acres per parcel will be permitted. (3) Low Density Residential areas, which may be developed to a density no greater than what the existing zoning district will allow under the conditions set forth in the Design Standards of the Plan; this includes the existing developed area of the Specific Plan area.

All development proposals within the Specific Plan area will be implemented by regulations outlined as follows: 1) the regulations shall apply to all land divisions, minor and major, regardless of parcel size. 2) the planned unit development concept shall apply. 3) all land development requests in the Specific Plan area shall come under the design standards and procedures under the processing requirements specified in Section III.

BACKGROUND

This Specific Plan implements the goals and policies of the Orinda Area General Plan of 1973. The broad objectives of the general Plan as stated on Page 18 are:

1. To preserve the unique character of Orinda which has evolved from its attractive physical setting and generally harmonious development.
2. To reach a balance between the number of families in Orinda and the space available.
3. To establish a pattern of land uses which will promote the highest degree of health, safety, efficiency, and well-being for all segments of the community.

A number of environmental goals are stated in the text as follows:

To allow new land development only in a manner that complements the natural features of the area including the topography, natural drainage ways, vegetation and soil characteristics; to preserve land for open space uses.

Principles

- Protect significant hilltops and ridges by limiting grading and development.
- Prevent erosion and soil slides by use of proper grading techniques and prohibition of development in particularly vulnerable areas.
- Hillsides that are used for land development should be treated in a manner that will, to the maximum degree possible, maintain the natural configuration of the slopes and protect the natural configuration of hilltops.
- When it is necessary to construct new channels or alter existing channels for drainage, improvements shall enhance the natural appearance of such channels and minimize the man-made characteristics of such treatment.
- Natural tree cover and vegetation should, wherever possible, be protected to insure the preservation of watershed protection and the natural beauty of the area. Significant trees should be preserved.
- Planting of trees and vegetation of a low combustion potential should be encouraged to reduce fire danger.
- Stringent soil stability and seismic safety tests should be required of all new developments within the planning area to minimize potential earthquake damage.
- Lands appropriate for park use that are now owned by public agencies should be utilized for park purposes wherever possible.

USERS GUIDE to the North Orinda Specific Plan

On November 21, 1978, the Board of Supervisors approved the North Orinda Specific Plan.

Effective immediately, all development proposals within the boundaries of the North Orinda Specific Plan shall be processed pursuant to the provisions of that plan. This memo is written to assist staff in understanding the provisions and policies of the Plan.

The Specific Plan contains the following designations: (1) Environmental Preservation, highly sensitive areas in which development should take place only with the specific approval of the Planning Commission (ridgelines, significant hillsides, tree cover, and creekbeds). Parcels created in the category are to be no less than 10 acres in size. (2) Large Lot Residential, limited development at a density of not less than 5 acres per parcel will be permitted. (3) Low Density Residential, density shall be no greater than what the existing zoning district will allow under the conditions set forth in the Design Standards of the Plan; this includes the existing developed area of the Specific Plan area. All development proposals within the Specific Plan area will be implemented by the planned unit development concept.

The purpose of the North Orinda Specific Plan is to encourage innovative planning, design, and development of building sites and necessary roads and driveways.

I. PERMITTED USES IN SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

1. Single-family dwellings.
2. Public Parks and public playgrounds.
3. Accessory buildings and accessory uses, normally auxiliary to a single-family dwelling (pump house, bath house, garden shed).

II. DESIGN STANDARDS

1. Site Preparation

- A. Grading. Grading shall be held to a minimum. Every effort shall be made to retain the natural features of the land.
- B. Roads. Roads shall be designed to hillside standards and shall reflect a rural rather than urban character. No roads shall be developed where the required grade is more than 15% unless evidence is presented that such roads can be built without environmental damage and used without public inconvenience. Roads serving 24 homes or fewer may be developed to private standards if dictated by environmental or topographic constraints; other roads must be developed to public standards.
 1. Pavement width should be as narrow as possible and consistent with safety.
 2. Pedestrian and bike paths shall be encouraged on all new roads outside the minimum pavement width.
 3. Periodic turnouts shall be provided for emergency parking and passing.
 4. Four off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each new single-family dwelling.
 5. The use of private roads will be permitted in areas of limited development.
- C. Erosion Control. Grading plans shall include erosion control and revegetation programs.
- D. Drainage. All construction shall assure drainage into a natural channel in a manner which will avoid significant erosion or damage to adjacent properties.
- E. Trees and Vegetation. In all instances every effort shall be made to avoid removal, changes or construction which would cause the death of trees or rare plant communities and wildlife habitats. Trees to be removed must be specified in the development plans.
- F. Fire Hazards. Development shall be permitted in areas of extreme fire hazard only where there are good access roads, adequate water supply, a reliable fire warning system, and fire protection service.
- G. Geologic Hazards. Construction shall not be permitted in identified seismic or geologic hazard areas such as on slides, on natural springs, and on identified fault zones, based on acceptable soils and geologic reports.

2. Project Design

- A. Slope Density. Density based on the average slope of the natural terrain shall be subject to the slope density formula in Appendix B of the General Plan or as revised by subsequent ordinance.

- B. Clustering Building Sites. Generally, building sites shall be clustered in the most accessible, least visually prominent and environmentally damaging, and most geologically stable portion or portions of a site.
- C. Ridgelines. In areas identified as "Environmental Preservation Zone" in the Specific Plan Map, no construction shall be permitted on ridge tops except by specific approval of the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors.
- D. Landscaping. Landscaping shall be allowed to disturb natural areas minimally, including open areas, and additional landscaping in a natural or semi-natural area shall be compatible with the native plant setting.
- E. Utilities. Street lights, if needed, shall be of low level intensity, and low in profile. In all areas, power and telephone lines shall be underground, where feasible.
- F. Building Siting. The lowest floor level shall not exceed 10 feet above natural grade at the lowest corner; unless the exterior walls of the building will extend below natural grade. No part of a building, structure, antenna, shall exceed 25 feet in height above natural grade, and no accessory building shall exceed 15 feet in height above natural grade measured from centerline of the building, perpendicular to the natural slope.
- G. Materials and Colors. Shall blend into the natural environment to the greatest extent possible. Natural products and earthtone colors should be used.
- H. Open Space Dedication. Land to be preserved as open space may be dedicated by fee title to a suitable public agency prior to issuance of any construction permit, or may remain in private ownership with appropriate scenic and/or open space easements dedicated to the public, and the County may require reasonable public access across those lands remaining in private ownership to gain access to public facilities.

The following three page document is the complete processing procedures section of the Plan. The text of the entire North Orinda Specific Plan is available.

III PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED DISTRICTS

The following sections of the Ordinance apply to all planned districts within the Specific Plan. Information to be submitted with Preliminary and Final Development Plan is specified as are procedures to be followed by the Planning Department, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors:

- 1. Submission requirements
 - A. Preliminary Development Plan. Twenty-five copies of the following maps, plans or written material, as applicable, shall be submitted to the Planning Director. Specific requirements may be waived by the Planning Director for good cause.

1. Preliminary conceptual grading plans, showing existing and proposed grades, the extent of cut and fill, slope angle of all banks and design of proposed retaining walls. Preliminary grading plans may be based on a photogrametric survey to a scale not less than 1" = 100". Contour lines of existing grades shall have the maximum intervals of 10 feet.

All grades and elevations shall be based upon Mean Sea Level Datum.

2. Existing use of property including building location, prominent geographic features, vegetation, including size of significant trees (trunk diameter breast height and outline of the canopy), and manmade improvements.
3. Preliminary Landscaping Plan (may be combined with site plan) showing:
 - a. All existing trees in excess of 6" measured 4' from the ground and spaced more than thirty feet apart by common name and spread. Trees proposed to be removed shall be indicated clearly.
 - b. In more densely wooded areas or in tree clusters, only the outline need be shown. However, trees within the clusters must be shown, if they are to be removed.
 - c. A conceptual plan for proposed trees and other plant material.
 - d. Standards for protecting significant trees to be retained.
4. Proposed site plan indicating vehicle and pedestrian circulation; bicycle pathways, if the property is included in or affected by the County Interim Bicycle Plan; paving coverage; access to adjoining streets; building location and driveways, lot lines and sizes, recreation facilities; and location and use of adjacent parcels and structures contiguous to the property.
5. Description of the proposed development including density, building heights, recreation facilities, preservation of open space, sewage disposal and public utilities, compliance with the General Plan, applicable specific plans and ordinances (slope density, hillside development, ridgelines, etc.) and variances from any of the above including set-backs, height, etc.
6. A preliminary geological reconnaissance report prepared by a registered engineering geologist.
7. A comprehensive slope analysis shall be submitted, based on a drawing no larger than 1 inch to 100 foot scale and contour intervals not greater than 10 feet. The analysis shall be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer and shall follow the format of Appendix B of the Orinda Area General Plan (or subsequent ordinance).
8. Construction phasing of project must be clearly shown on maps submitted.
9. Such additional information as may be required by the Planning Director.

- B. Final Development Plan. Four copies of the following maps, plans or written material as applicable shall be submitted to the Planning Department, with submission requirements to be determined by the Planning Director.

1. Boundary survey map of all subdivided parcels.
2. Final grading plans, showing existing and proposed grades, the extent of cut and fill, and slope angle of all banks, contour lines of existing grades shall have the following maximum intervals:
 - a. Ten-foot contour interval for ground slope over 15%
 - b. Five-foot contour interval for ground slope below 15%
3. Drainage and flood control plans.
4. Proposed site plan with building locations, parking spaces, public area, vehicle and pedestrian circulation including access to adjoining streets. The number of parking spaces per parking area shall be delineated.
5. Landscaping plans (may be combined with site plan), including species, container size and irrigation and maintenance plans.
6. Sketch plans for buildings including design concept, color and external materials, or equivalent review.
7. Summary statement on net and gross densities, area of public and private open space, number and types of units, required and proposed number of parking, public utilities including methods of sewage disposal and maintenance of all common facilities.
8. A preliminary soils report prepared by a registered civil engineer based upon adequate test borings or excavations. A preliminary geological report based upon adequate tests and prepared by a registered engineering geologist.
9. Conditions, covenants and Restrictions or deed restrictions and such additional information as may be required by the Planning Director.

2. Approvals.

A. Preliminary Development Plan

1. Action by Planning Commission

The Planning Commission may recommend approval, conditional approval or denial of any application. The Planning Commission's actions may specify any reasonable condition which is likely to benefit the general welfare of future residents in the development, their environment, and the purposes of the district, or will ameliorate any burdens the development will otherwise thrust upon the community.

2. Action by the Board of Supervisors.

The Board of Supervisors may approve, conditionally approve or deny the Preliminary Development Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission.

B. Final Development Plan

After approval of the Preliminary Development plan, no development and/or land improvements and/or building construction shall commence until a Final Development Plan is approved for a portion of, or for the entire area of, said Preliminary Development Plan. All development and/or land improvement and/or building construction shall be substantially in conformance with the approved Final Development Plan. The Final Development Plan for all or a portion of the area shall be approved by the Planning Commission; its action is final unless appealed to the Board of Supervisors. A mandatory finding shall be made that the Final development Plan is in substantial accordance with the approved Preliminary Development Plan. Public areas necessary for convenience and general welfare shall be dedicated or reserved for public purpose.

1. Expiration date

If no application for a Final Development Plan is filed subsequent to a Preliminary Development Plan or if no building permit is issued, said Plan shall expire four (4) years from the date of the approval of the plan or the approval of the Final Development Plan.

2. Amendments

A Final Development Plan may be amended by the Board of Supervisors or the Planning Commission, pursuant to the same procedures specified for initial approval.